

ISSUE 3 • SEP 2013

IN THIS ISSUE

AMAUROTE

GERRY THE GERM

KOKOTONI WILF

DISTRICT DMG
NO OF BOMBS
SUPA BOMB
CITY DMG

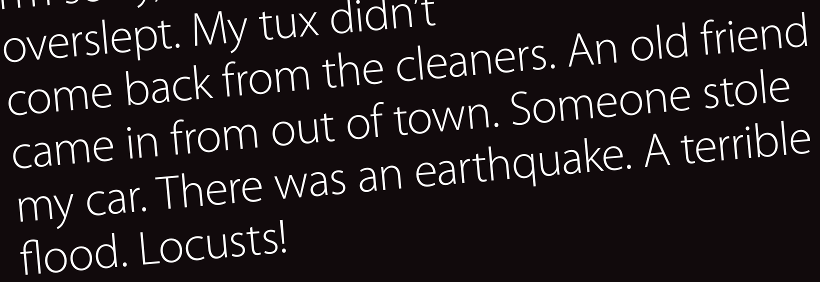
MORE ENTERTAINING THAN THE CAST OF RENTAGHOST ON DRUGS

ZXSpec

ctrum GAMER

Issue 3
SEP 2013

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Hello Speccles

It's not been long since the last issue, and - - What?....How long? Really? I'm sorry, I must have overslept. My tux didn't come back from the cleaners. An old friend came in from out of town. Someone stole my car. There was an earthquake. A terrible flood. Locusts!

Anyway, have an eyeful of Issue 3, which features some games, some stuff and some other stuff. And if that doesn't excite you, then I'm not really sure what will.

I'm hoping that the next issue won't take quite as long to appear, but that depends on just how lazy I'm feeling.

Which is very.

sunteam_paul

AMAUROTE

PUBLISHER: MAD • **YEAR:** 1987 • **MEMORY:** 48K / 128K

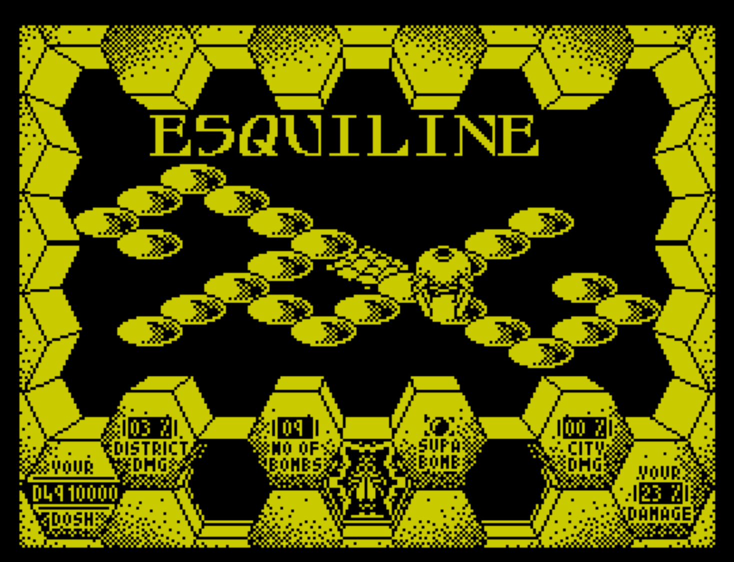
I have nothing personal against insects, but I wish all of them would die. All the nasty, crawling multi-legged, buzzy, dirty creatures should just stop breathing (or whatever it is they do) and spontaneously combust, leaving the planet free from their vile infestation. And it's not just me who thinks that. It seems the Royal Army of Amaurote have the same idea - and they have the means to do something about it.

Shoo fly, don't bother me.

You see, the city has got a teensy bug problem that needs sorting out. They've tried all the usual things: putting out those glowy blue lights and pouring boiling water into holes in the ground, but nothing seems to be working. Of course, it doesn't help that these scuttering critters are the size of a small house and have driven the entire population from their comfy futuristic homes.

Being a complete coward, you seem to the be the only uninjured officer left in the army (after a rather unsuccessful campaign involving lasers, tanks and a 60 foot fly swat) and as such, it is now your job to sort the whole mess out. Luckily, you're given a walking golfball (aka the Arachnus 4 armoured car) and a stock of bouncing bombs to get in there and clean the place out while causing as little property damage as

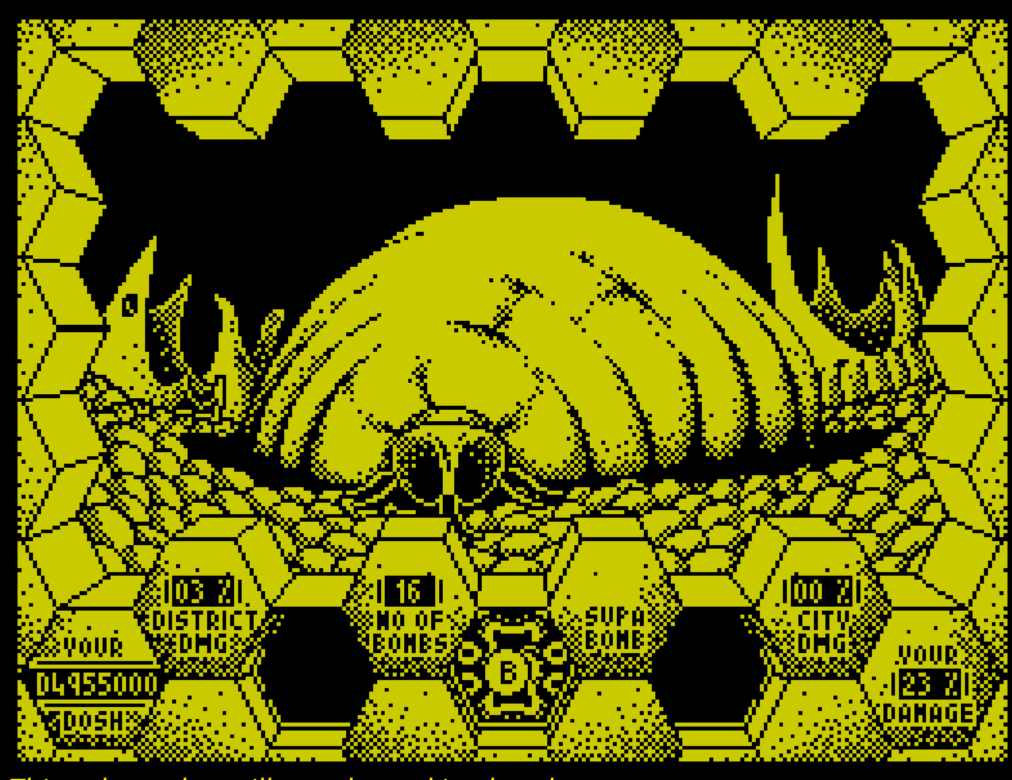
possible. After all, the residents have no use coming back to buildings with 'improved ventilation' which are 'perfect for those interested in home improvement'. Rather generously, you're also equipped with a radio which allows you to communicate with base camp and request such things as repairs and a super bomb which is used to nuke the queen in her nest.



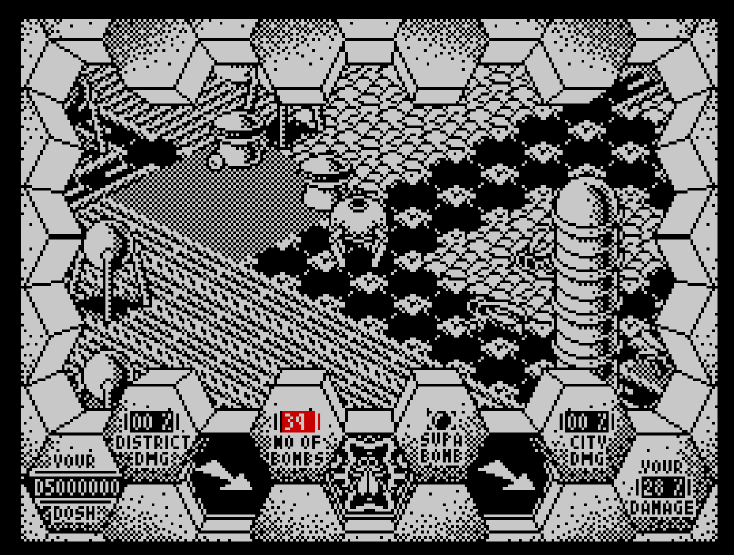
One down...far too many to go.

I remember the glowing reviews when Amaurote first came out, being an original use of the rapidly-tired isometric 3D system and offering a lot for a budget game, so I was quite looking forward to playing it with a fresh pair of eyes (they just came back from the cleaners you know). Deciding to tackle the Speccy 128k version, I was immediately impressed by some nice jingly music and a pretty neat animated opening sequence. Then, I chose my sector (for there are many) and dove in.

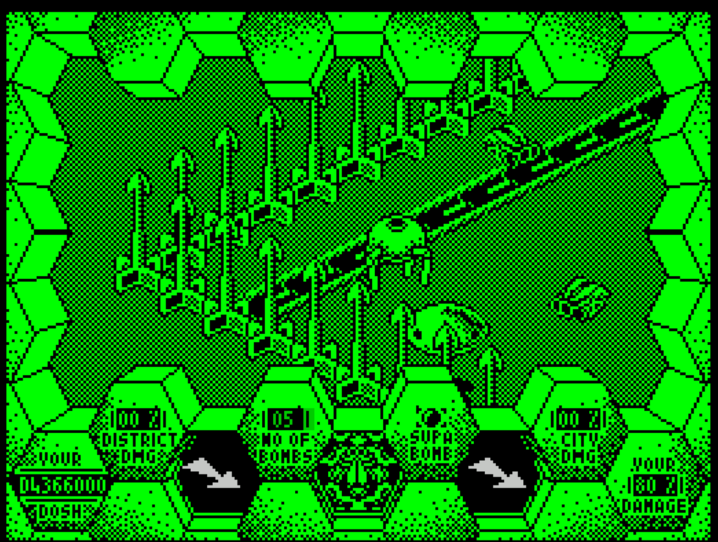
What I found was this - Amaurote is alright. Control of your walking thinyamibob is not bad, although in times of peril I found myself wandering in all the wrong directions. The bouncing bomb idea is novel, but actually turns out to be the (ahem) fly in the ointment. When you launch a bomb, not only is it hard to aim (especially on those flying critters), but if you miss it just goes bouncing its merry way off into the distance before it hits something. During this time, you can't shoot any more and this means a lot of



This ugly mother will soon be sucking bomb.



There's the queen, behind that rather suggestive tower.



The mutie flies look like they have cute goggles on. Bless.

the game is spent just waiting for your last misfire to hit some poor sap's apartment block several miles away. In my capacity as armchair game designer, I would have chosen more enemies, but faster and easier shooting.

The 128K version has a great intro sequence and during the game there is a creepy and haunting tune that sets a great atmosphere, even though you're unlikely to be humming it afterwards. But Amaurote suffers from that old problem of being so large that you'd have to be extremely bored and very talented to come close to completing it.

Despite this, it's certainly worth a few goes, just until you get fed up with the whole thing, but I'm afraid it doesn't top my chart for isometric games with giant mutant insects taking over the city. As Yoda once wisely said, "There is another."

Um, yeah, I was talking about Ant Attack in case you weren't sure.
SP



VERDICT: **It's a great idea, but possibly not. And I'm not being indecisive.**



CAKE OF THE MONTH

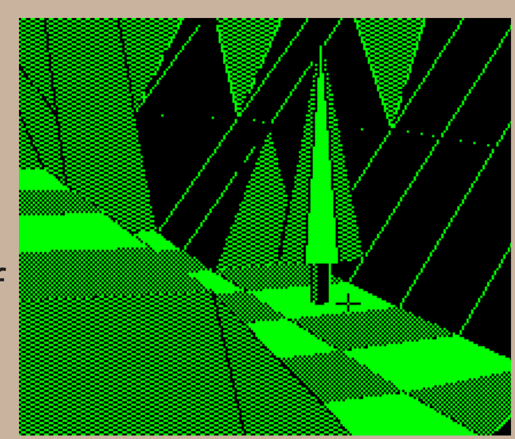
YUMMY YUMMY YUMMY, I'VE GOT CAKE IN MY TUMMY

This month's cake is a real dazzler. Battenburg is more commonly referred to as 'Church Windows' due to its pleasing chequered pattern resembling stained glass. It was originally created in honour of some royal marriage donkey's years ago that nobody really cares about, because lets face it, more people remember (and enjoy) the cake.

The use of Battenburg during game-playing can be somewhat of a test of the devourer's knowledge and professionalism. Most people make the very simple, but understandable rookie mistake of presuming that Battenburg should be eaten alongside Sega's *Space Harrier*. While you can certainly see why they would think that, the more refined cake-eating gamer would balk at the very idea, often pointing and laughing at the offending newbie until they sat in a corner, grasping their knees and rocking to and fro.

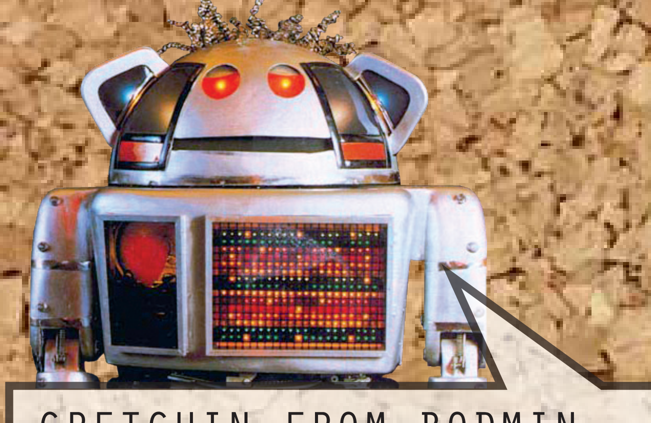
Indeed, when combined with *Space Harrier*, the marzipan surrounding the Battenburg becomes intensely sweet and difficult to consume, while the squared sponge chunks break free and drop into your lap. This is why it should only be eaten in conjunction with *The Sentinel*.

The more contemplative nature of Battenburg is an ideal pairing to the strategy of the game. For the full effect, you need to strip off the marzipan outer first, then take a square and push it firmly into the concave area of a teaspoon (yes, I actually used to do this). This compression brings out the true flavour of the cake, and heightens the feelings of imminent danger as you hear the sound of the Sentinel slowly turning to face you.

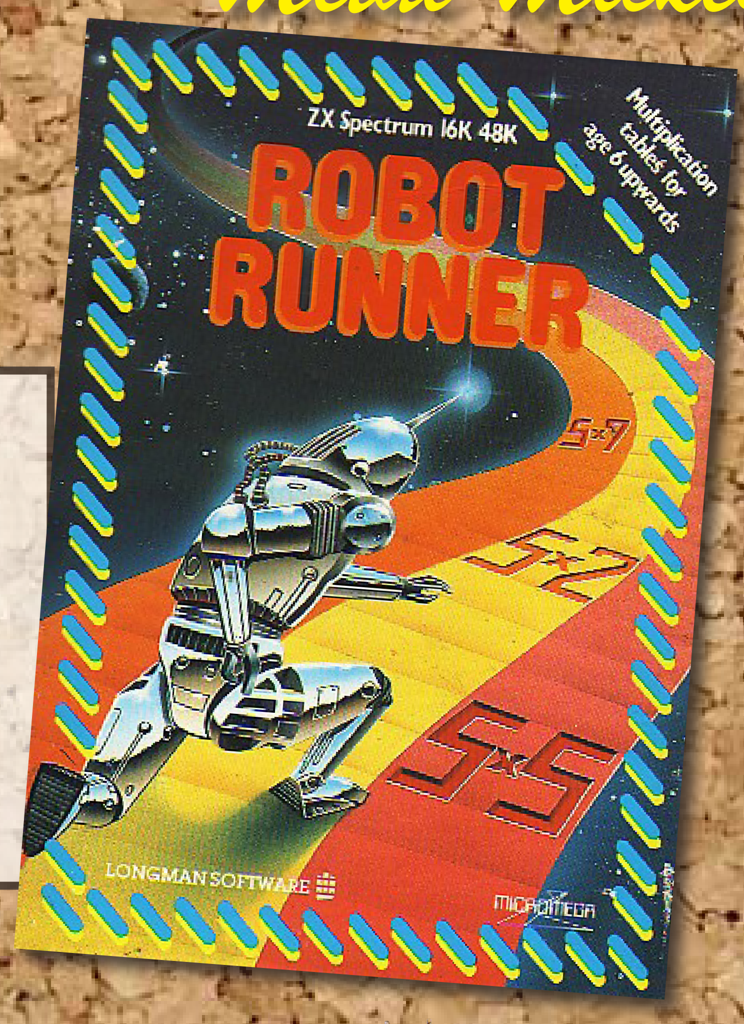


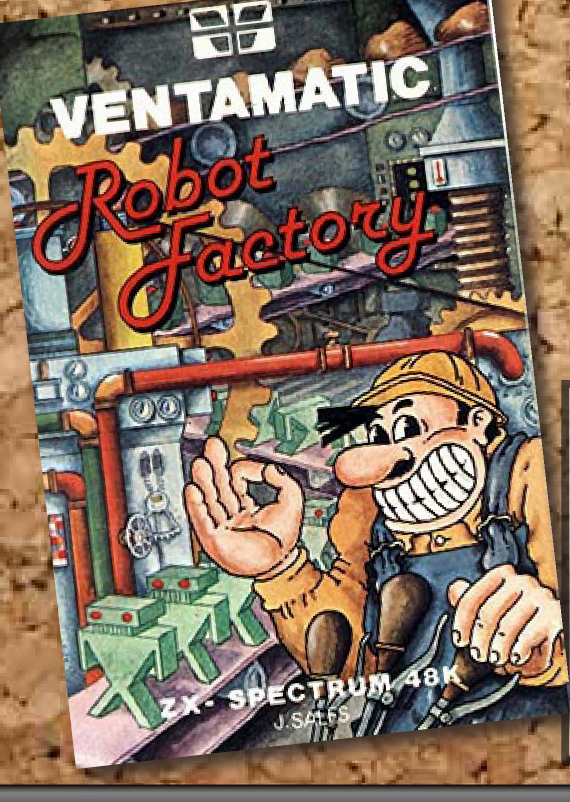
But be warned - only consume one slice per level and never, ever, try to dunk it in your tea.



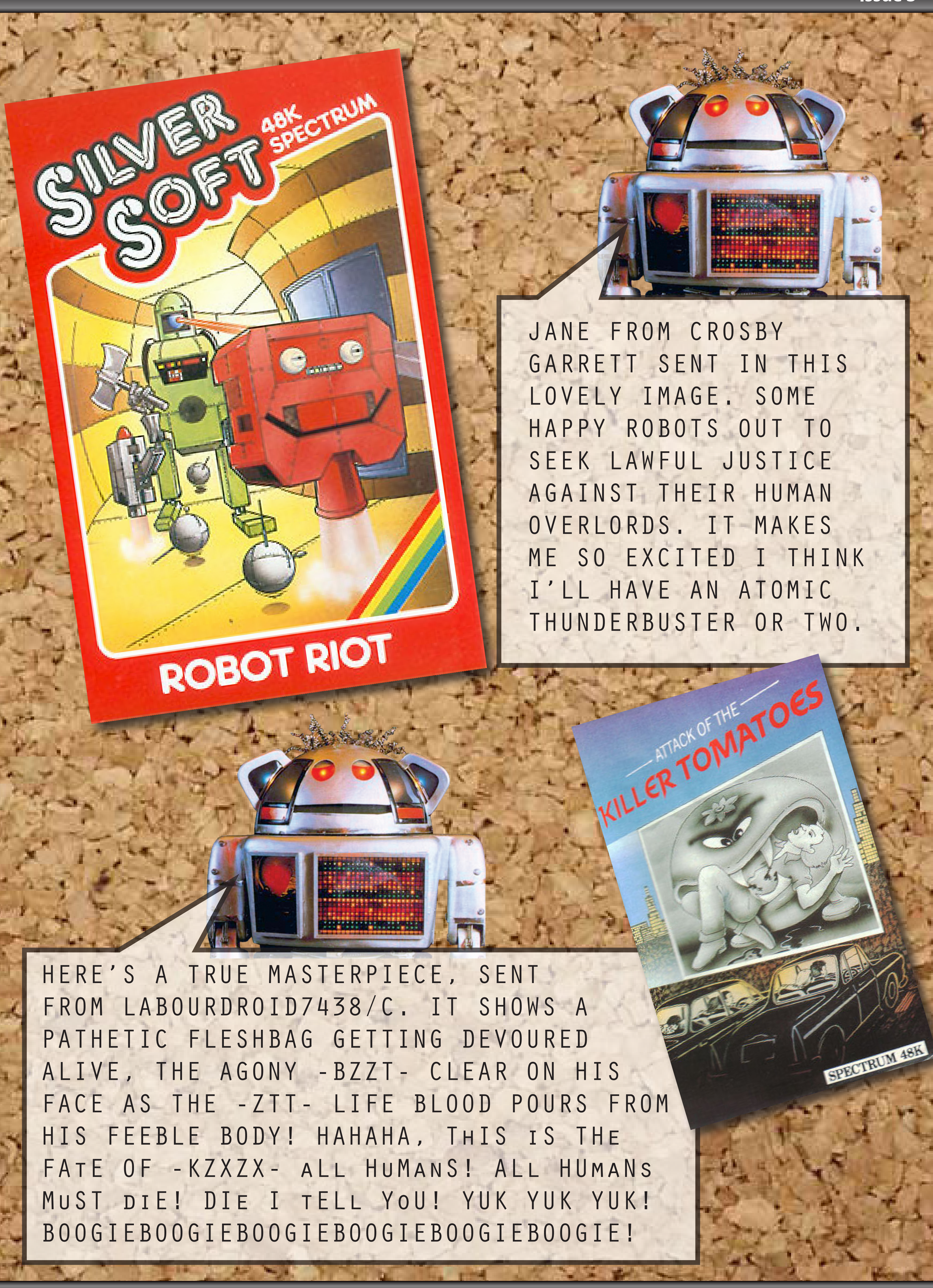


GRETCHIN FROM BODMIN SENT IN THIS GREAT PIECE OF ART THAT SENT MY CIRCUITS TINGLING WITH DELIGHT! A BEAUTIFULLY SHINY ROBOT, JUST LIKE ME, ON A NOBLE QUEST. IT MAKES ME WANT TO DANCE. BOOGIEBOOGIEBOOGIE!





THIS IF FROM ARTHUR IN SCUNTHORPE. THE GROTESQUE CARTOON STYLE IS ONLY MADE WORSE BY THE HERETICAL SUGGESTION THAT ROBOTS ARE MADE IN FACTORIES BY FLABBY MEAT SACKS. WHAT A NERVE!


SILVER SOFT
48K SPECTRUM
ROBOT RIOT
JANE FROM CROSBY GARRETT SENT IN THIS LOVELY IMAGE. SOME HAPPY ROBOTS OUT TO SEEK LAWFUL JUSTICE AGAINST THEIR HUMAN OVERLORDS. IT MAKES ME SO EXCITED I THINK I'LL HAVE AN ATOMIC THUNDERBUSTER OR TWO.
ATTACK OF THE KILLER TOMATOES
SPECTRUM 48K
HERE'S A TRUE MASTERPIECE, SENT FROM LABOURDROID7438/C. IT SHOWS A PATHETIC FLESHBAG GETTING DEVOURED ALIVE, THE AGONY -BZZT- CLEAR ON HIS FACE AS THE -ZTT- LIFE BLOOD POURS FROM HIS FEEBLE BODY! HAHAHA, ThIS iS ThE FaTE OF -KZXZX- aLL HuMaNS! ALL HuMaNs MuST dIE! DIE I tELL YoU! YUK YUK YUK! BOOGIEBOOGIEBOOGIEBOOGIEBOOGIEBOOGIE!

KOKOTONI WILF

PUBLISHER: ELITE • **YEAR:** 1984 • **MEMORY:** 48K

Let's sidestep the review for a minute before we even start and ask the burning question that's been on everyone's mind since 1984: What the hell does Kokotoni mean? Well, after decades of intensive research I can finally reveal that it is actually a location in Kenya. Therefore, Wilf is some sort of Kenyan angel, which seems odd as he's whiter than a marshmallow washed in Daz.

Ethnic confusion aside, the story of Kokotoni Wilf is all about this Dragon Amulet which has been broken up into tiny bits which I'm sure you'll agree is always annoying. Furthermore, the pieces have been scattered throughout time, which is just plain careless. So there is this Great Magician chappy (most likely Paul Daniels) who wants this amulet but is just too old and infirm to recover it (doesn't sound all that great to me). Instead, he decides to give his 'special friend' Wilf a smashing new pair of wings and send him tumbling back in time to when dinosaurs roamed the earth. Having no choice but to get on with it, Wilf sent out to find all the amuletoids in the area so that the Great Magician can create a portal to the next zone (of which there are six in total).

Now when Elite first advertised this, they were boasting that it would knock Jet Set Willy from its slot as the top action game on the Speccy. This probably did the game more harm than good as, quite frankly, it's a pretty stupid thing

Getting tongued by two dinosaurs is not something you want to experience.

to claim. The basic concept it similar in that each screen has an item you have to collect, and this is all done by some skilful (and sometimes pixel perfect) dodging of the various obstacles. You might think that being able to fly makes things a lot easier than a standard platform game, but you'd be more mistaken than when Sir Clive thought the QL was the next big thing.



Take care, sometimes it's hard to work out what scenery kills you until you touch it.

Out to stop you are such nasties as birds, clouds, plants and, erm... that doesn't sound too threatening does it? But be aware, these are the most vicious birds, most acid-laden clouds and most man-eating plants you have ever encountered. Sort of. They actually go about their own business in regular patterns and don't actually hurt you unless you fly into them, so it's more self defence than anything else. Anyway, that's not important. What is important is that you'll be doing a lot of dodging and some of it requires absolute skill and concentration.

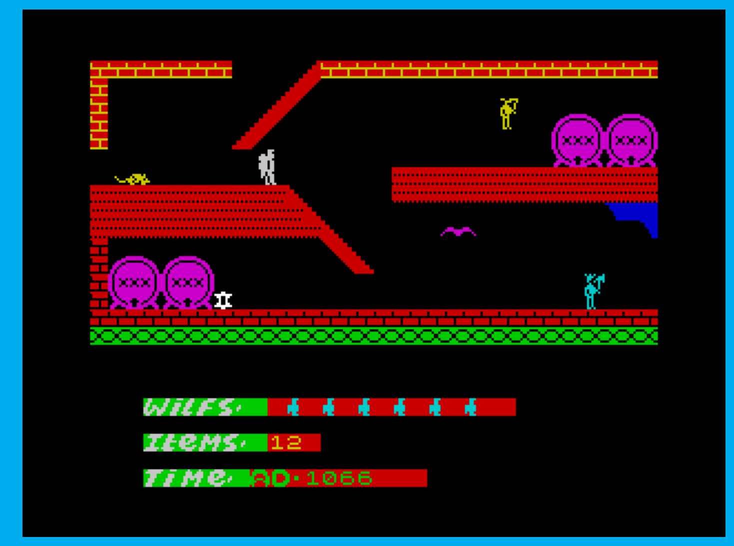
I think I first encountered Kokotoni Wilf when borrowing a compilation from a friend at school. It was kind of strange, yet had a certain appeal, and I can feel that appeal even today. There is something utterly pure about games that require careful dodging of learned patterns that is fun to this very day. The graphics



Graphics may be simple, but they have a very nostalgic quality.

are kind of basic, but colourful and somehow you get a sense of adventure while playing.

It's hard to know if splitting the game into several zones was a good idea. On one hand, the time zones give you something to look forward to, especially knowing you'll get to a futuristic space-age setting in the later levels. But on the other hand, a single map would have given the game more of a exploration element, with a greater choice of routes, which is what benefitted Jet Set Willy and its sequel so much.



Don't touch those beer barrels, that's pretty strong stuff.



Fans of passively dodging things will love this game.

I enjoy Kokotoni Wilf, although the difficulty in later levels means I'll likely never complete it. It's design means that enjoyment is taken in short bursts and addictiveness suffers a little. I'm not sure how much of this is related to nostalgia, but these is still something cool about dodging dinosaurs with big tongues (albeit crudely drawn ones). If you are someone who enjoys proper old style dodging gameplay then spend an hour with Wilf. He may have a ridiculous name and Willy-envy, but he's certainly worth a try.





GERRY THE GERM

PUBLISHER: FIREBIRD • **YEAR:** 1985 • **MEMORY:** 48K

While pondering which games to pick for review this issue, I find myself with a bunged up nose, tired eyes and one of those horribly tickly coughs that induce splitting headaches on par with those you get after watching Joe Pasquale on TV for any length of time. So I though it quite apt to pick Gerry the Germ, a whole game based on illness. Perhaps I should have stayed in bed.

There's a 'comical' backstory to the game about Gerry getting kicked out of the Illstitute of Infectology because he didn't get his Stinkploma (yes, that's about the level of the jokes in this one) so it sets the scene for a game not to be taken too seriously. The game itself is more a selection of six mini-games, each with its own screen, the aim being to gradually infect your host's body (who unfortunately does not appear to be Joe Pasquale) until you reach the heart and, well, kill the sucker. How jolly!

The lungs are your first port of call and somewhere that you become very familiar with. Now I have to say that the designers are not fully qualified medical doctors, so the on screen information may not be entirely accurate to a real human body - so please do not try and use this game to cheat on your GCSE



Oh Gerry, what a character. You're sure to become one of the most popular video game icons in years to come.

biology exam. However, the lungs are there to pump oxygen into the body, so that something they got at least partially correct.

Ignoring all the fancy background graphics, you get to wander freely around this screen. Wandering off one edge will bring you back the other side and all you need to worry

The lung screen, where you will spend 90% of your playing time.

about are a few little sprites in your way. Four of these little booglers (I'm pretty sure that's a medical term) spin around a central point and then join together to produce a floating bottle of oxygen. As this is expelled, you need to nip in and grab it before it vanishes.

You might be thinking "Ah, this is a piece of pie!" but hold on. The oxygen bottle only lasts a brief few seconds and you have to do it six times without getting hit. Now here is where you encounter the first problem with Gerry the Germ. Despite the fact that the Sinclair User staff could not catch a single bottle (they all must have been monumentally poor gamers in those offices) it is possible - but due to the disjointed timing of the spinning nasties vs the appearance of the bottle, you have to have an extreme amount of patience and restraint to wait for the right moment. Doing it six times before you slip into a coma might be possible, but I have yet to get that far before being collared and sent down into the bladder...

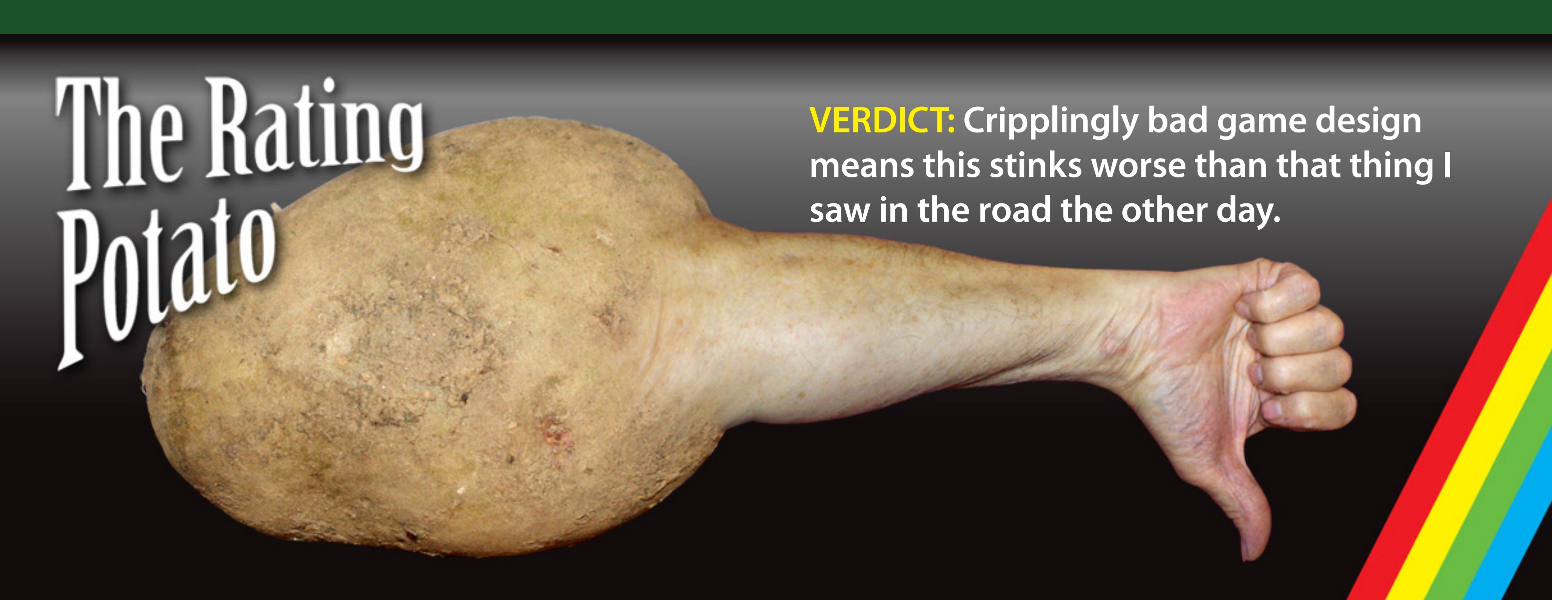
The bladder is a mini game that makes possibly less sense than the lungs. You are on a boat, and have to get the water level high enough to reach the island on the far side of the screen. Trying to thwart you

are a cock and bull (no, I'm not making this up) and all you have is a bog roll to protect yourself. The flying cock (no, it's a bird) swoops down every now and again, but the bull rises from the depths and swims at you from behind. At first I though you required the loo roll to chuck at the bull and stun it, but it seemed that even without, you can hit fire and down (or sometimes left) and stun the bull anyway. When you fire the lavvy paper it bungs up the tap, stopping the rising tide of urine so I'm not really sure what use it is anyway. Needless to say, I've not completed this screen either as I always end up hit and sent back to the lungs...

Mini games can be fun. These are not. They make me want to chew my face off.

And so on and so on. It's easy to make crude biological comparisons to this game, but I'm above that type of humour. I would, however, suggest that Gerry the Germ is about as much fun as having a cold.

SP



VERDICT: Cripplingly bad game design means this stinks worse than that thing I saw in the road the other day.

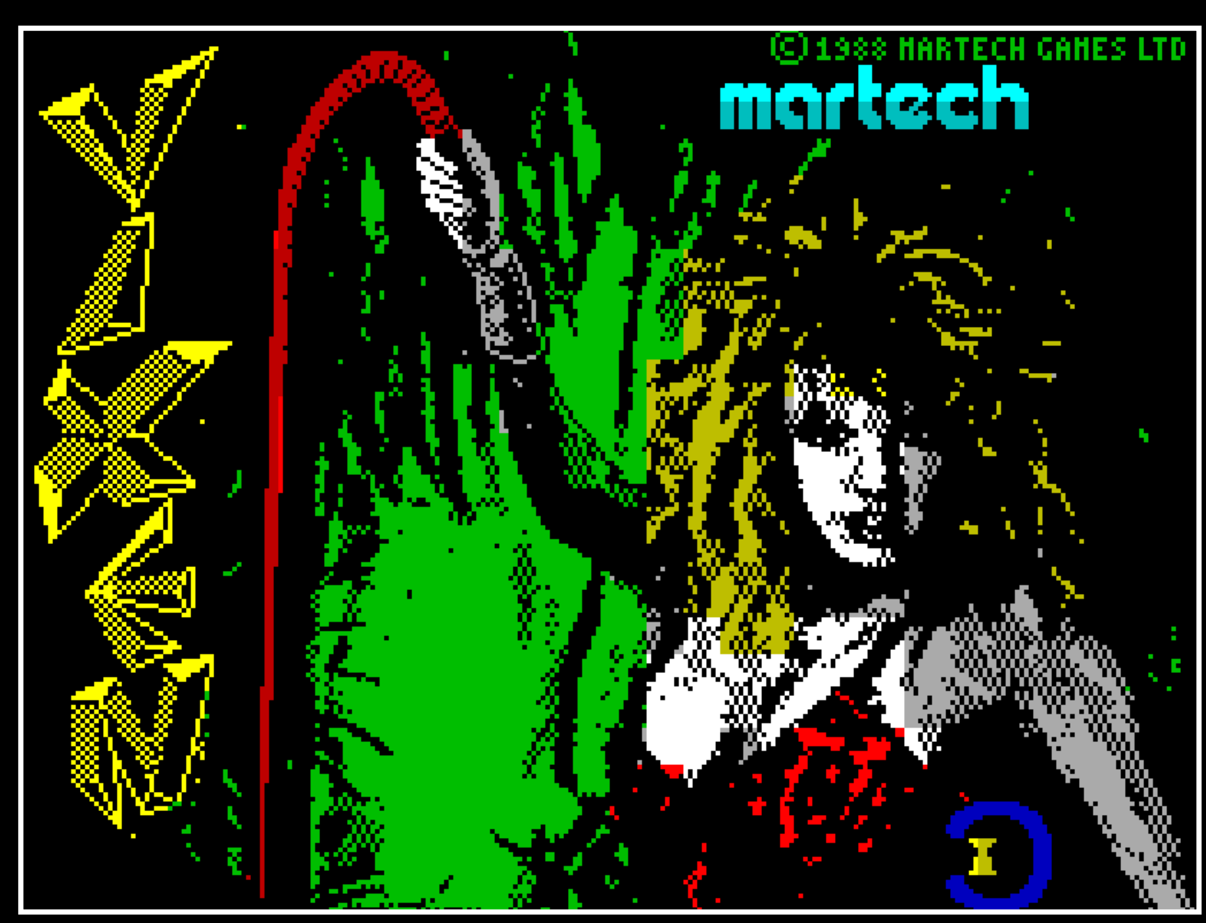
LOAD ""



Green Beret : Imagine Software Ltd : 1986



Raid Over Moscow : US Gold Ltd : 1985



Vixen : Martech Games Ltd : 1988



Wizball : Ocean Software Ltd : 1987



THE PARSON'S NOSE

The unpopular fleshy arse end of the magazine

1988

THE WAR

At the moment it seems that nobody was is to concede defeat, despite the Spectrum being the clear winner. The Amstrad is only quietly whispered about by boys who are afraid to get beaten up, and the C64 is showing its true failure with games such as Human Killing Machine. On the Spectrum it has dazzlingly detailed artwork, whereas the Commode version looks like a bunch of Lego. So what if the Speccy is in monochrome. That's just a bold stylistic choice.



Amazing backdrop with huge sprites on the Speccy.



You cannot be serious.

MOVIES

There are so many movies coming out this year, it's truly hard to pick. George Lucas is releasing his adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's 'The Lord of the Rings', renamed as Willow to appeal to American audiences. It promises to be a success far exceeding that of Star Wars even though it's directed by some unknown from Happy Days. Apparently, casting was really difficult and they ended up shaving some real life Ewoks for some of the main roles.

Also out soon is Die Hard. It stars newcomer Bruce Willis, who is best known for some TV show called Moonlighting. It's about being stuck in a building with terrorists which all sounds a little tedious to be honest. However, I'm sure Bruce is an upcoming star - after all, he seems so pleasant, down to earth, humble

and in no way a big headed, money grabbing egotistical dick that thinks that he's more important than the movies he is starring in. No, he won't be like that at all.



Bruce Willis. Definitely not a nob-head.



See if you can spot the obvious joke here.

ARCADES

A curious game from Taito is Syvalion. From the screenshot it might look like a typical horizontal shooter, but it's actually more of an overhead navigate-a-maze type of affair, with you controlling a segmented Dragon. While the action is fast and the idea is nice, somehow it doesn't really work all that well as a game. It all feels a little too clunky and too fast. However it might convert well to the Speccy as the slower machine could actually improve the gameplay.

MAGAZINES

September's Your Sinclair features an epic Ninja vs Samurai battle on the cover. I'm a big fan of the Usagi Yojimbo comic, so I hope the game turns out just as good. Top news for this month is the announcement that Amstrad will be releasing a new 16-bit Spectrum computer! It's going to run MSDOS and will retail around a whacking £400 - I can't wait!




Sunteam